

In this manner, artists continue to create traditional Buddhist sculpture, painting and ritual objects. Our times bring certain adjustments: there are more individual auteur and signed works, new materials and techniques are used, portrait tradition becomes more widespread.

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REJUVENATION OF BUDDHIST ART AND PRACTICE IN INDIA

The first Buddhist chisels probably resonated across Ajanta's horse-shoe-shaped stone ravine sometime in the second century BC, followed by a number of caves like Ellura, Bhaja, Karla, Bedsa, Pithalkhora and many others and a vast number of sculptures and stupas. The beginnings may be traced to the Kalinga war when having come out victorious Emperor Ashoka, instead of celebrating his success, deeply regretted the bloodshed and looked on violence with abhorrence. He devoted himself to Dharma and his mission was to spread Buddhism in and outside India. He divided the relics, commissioned stupas for them, and got caves, capitals and sculptures erected. During the Maurya, Shunga, Andhra, Kushan, Gupta, medieval periods in north and the Pala period in east, India witnessed the beauty of art, architecture, sculpture, paintings, writing and lively practice of Buddhism. The Land of the Buddha shone in full glory. Buddhism became interwoven with Hindu practices and it influenced art as well. In the twelfth century, when Islam attacked north India, Hindu culture was taken aback,

but Buddhism began fading out. Following the political upheaval of events in Tibet in the 1950s many lineage streams of Tibet fled to India. Their Dharma-land of India provided shelter and they flourished. They found a new homeland, settled here and over the years enriched the culture of India. Buddhism found its rejuvenation in its original homeland.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Dharmashala

On 31st March 1959, His Holiness the Dalai Lama left Tibet and since then has lived in exile in India. Dalai is a Mongolian word meaning "Ocean" and Lama is a Tibetan term corresponding to Indian word "Guru" which denotes a teacher. Together the word Dalai and Lama are sometimes loosely translated as "ocean of wisdom". McLeodGanj lying in the upper reaches of India is known worldwide for the presence of the Dalai Lama. On 29 April 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) established the Tibetan government in exile in the Indian hill station of Mussorie. In May 1960, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) moved to Dharamshala. This place is the centre of the Tibetan world in India. Following the 1959 Tibetan uprising there has been an influx of Tibetan refugees in the wake of the Dalai Lama. Dharmashala is a popular destination for tourists and students studying Tibetan art, culture and language.

Palpung Sherabling Monastic Institute

The twelfth Tai Situpa Pemo Donyo Nyinje fled to Bhutan and then to India. He resided in Sikkim where he later joined His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa. In 1975 at the age of 22, he assumed his traditional responsibility as the twelfth Keting Tai Situpa by establishing the Palpung Sherabling Monastery in Himachal Pradesh, India.

Palpung Sherabling Monastic Institute began functioning in 1975. A main shrine hall on the first floor representing the Theravada lineage is built in traditional design with elaborately carved columns, brackets and cornices. A 42 feet statue of Lord Maitreya, the future Buddha, looks majestically into the shrine hall, which is used for large gatherings, empowerments and practices of the sutras and tantras. On the second floor, representing the Mahayana tradition, are the statues of Lord Buddha and eight Bodhisattvas. Three-dimensional carved wooden mandalas of the 14 Tantras of Marpa are enshrined in the monastery. The monastery accords well with the injunctions of the Vinaya-vastu that it should be painted with the visual representations of the sutras and as such its walls have splendid murals.

The 19 feet stupa made of gilded copper, inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones, enshrines relics of the eighth Keting Tai Situpa Chokyi Jaunge and the holy relics collected from the reliquary of the Palpung

monastery. In addition, a 41feet high stupa in the holy precincts commemorates eight events in the life of the Buddha. The eight events are (I) descent from Tusita heaven, (II) enlightenment, (III) grand miracle at Sravasti, (IV) dharma-cakra-pravartana, (V) Kaniska-stupa, (VI) many-door caitya (VII) reconciliation at Rajagrha, and (VIII) nirvana.

Shanti Stupas

Not only from Tibet, but Buddhist monks from countries like Japan have also found a new home for their practices and meditation in India. One example is of Bhikshu Gyomyo Nakamura of Japan. He is comfortable with a number of foreign languages including Tibetan and Hindi. He started a temple in Delhi and then erected the Shanti Stupa in Ladakh.

Bhikshu Nakamura is a disciple of Fuji Guruji. Fuji Guruji was against the militarization of Japan and wished to consecrate 108 stupas of peace throughout the world. For this he left Japan and came to India in 1934. He stayed with Mahatma Gandhi in Wardha Ashram. His daily recitation of *Namu Myoho-enge-kyo* came to be included in the daily prayers of Mahatma Gandhi. It means homage to the Lotus Sutra. It's chanting means reciting the complete sutra. Bhikshu Nakamura was one of the dynamic disciples of Fuji Guruji. During his early years in India, he was actively engaged in constructing the Shanti stupa in Rajagriha near Mount Gridhrakuta where the Lotus Sutra was proclaimed by Lord Buddha. After the nirvana of his Guruji, Nakamura set himself to collect funds for the construction of the Shanti stupa in Leh. Today this stupa is one of the important places of visit. Bhikshu Nakamura's establishment of the stupa was welcomed by the Defence Forces of India. All tourists to Ladakh are fascinated by its architecture and the Buddhas on its four sides. Bhikshu Nakamura belongs to the Nichiren sect. The great teacher Nichiren said 500 years ago that someday the Lotus sutra will travel from the Land of the Sun (Japan) to the Land of the Moon (India). So the sects of Nichiren Daishonin are active in the propagation of this Sutra in India. Now Bhikshu Nakamura believes in ecumenical Buddhism beyond any sectarian denomination, hence he calls his temple the "World Buddhist Centre" to which all are welcome.

The consecration of the Shanti Stupa was performed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Central Government and the state Government supported him in this endeavor and the then Prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi donated funds for the Shanti stupa road, the Defense Ministry provided construction material and the state Government gave timber for the stupa and the members of Ladakhi Buddhist community offered voluntary labor. Buddhist from Japan and India gave financial support and the beautiful stupa now illuminates the sky-line of Ladakh.

Shanti-stupa in Delhi and the Soka Gakkai all over India

The followers of Nichiren Daishonin have created beautiful stupas in India. They have followed the tradition of Emperor Ashoka to establish 84,000 stupas in India and the neighboring countries. Delhi the capital of India has also been blessed by a Shanti Stupa of the Nichiren sect planned and executed by Bhikshuni Horyuchi who is a disciple of Fuji Guruji. The Soka Gakkai, again of the Nichiren denomination, is making phenomenal progress in bringing the meditation of the Lotus Sutra to the elite of Indian society.

Dorzhong Buddhist Monastic Institute at Jangchub Jong

The Dorzhong Buddhist Monastic Institute at Jangchub Jong, Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh, founded in 2010 preserves the Buddha dharma and the Drukpa Kagyu tradition in particular. It helps students of the neighboring regions to study and practice Buddha dharma in the tradition of their ancestors. Escaping from Tibet in 1994 at the age of 11, Trinley Thaye Dorje lived in Delhi and Kalimpong for years. Today in his campus one can see the growing popularity of Buddhism amongst the young and the restless, a quarter-life-crisis. Terms like mid-life or quarter-life crisis are phenomena that emerged in the mayhem of the second half of the 20th century, after the breakdown of traditional values in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Karma Kagyu School, New Delhi

Trinley Thaye Dorje is a claimant to the see of the 17th Karmapa. He is head of the Karma Kagyu School, which is one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Karma Kagyu, or Kamtsang Kagyu, is probably the largest and the most widely practised lineages within the Kagyu School. The lineage has long-standing monasteries in Tibet, China, Russia, Mongolia, India, Nepal, and Bhutan, and currently centres in 62 countries. The spiritual head of the Karma Kagyu is the Gyalwa Karmapa. From the 2nd to the 10th Karmapas were principal spiritual advisors to successive Emperors of China. The Karma Kagyupas are sometimes called the “Black Hat” Lamas, with reference to the Black Crown worn by them. The Kagyu lineage is one of the four major lineages of Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet. Its main branch, and the largest, is the Karma Kagyu, which has been guided over eight hundred years by successive incarnations of its supreme head. With the spread of Vajrayana Buddhism beyond Tibet over the last fifty years, numerous Karma Kagyu Dharma centres have been founded all over the world

under the inspiration of His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, Ranjung Rigpe Dorje, and with the aim of making the teachings of the Buddha available around the world and independent of every state, religion or political institution. Over 919 Buddhist centres and monasteries of the Karma Kagyu lineage in 65 countries follow H. H. the 17th Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje who was recognised by H. H. the 14th Shamarpa Mipham Chokyi Lodro.

According to the 800-year old tradition of the Karma Kagyu lineage, successive reincarnations of the Karmapas and Shamarpas recognise each other. In the history of Tibetan Buddhism, the Karmapa was the first reincarnated lama and Shamarpa was the second. The Karma Kagyu school stands in the Qutub Institutional area in Delhi. It teaches Buddhism, chanting, art and philosophical texts.

These great masters have designed many of the buildings in keeping with the tenets of geomancy, integrating traditional Tibetan architecture with modern materials while maintaining a harmonious ecological balance. They have developed them as centers of learning and practice, painting and sculpture, meditation and chanting, spirituality and dance etc. The libraries provide rich textual material.

Today there are a number of active Buddhist monasteries and other institutions, and new ones are emerging, which have once more enlivened Buddhism in India. The building of the monastic institutes is a historic event of renewing the traditions of the great Tibetan *oikoumene* and its vast network of *Chos.skor* in the western regions of the Tibetan cultural world. The traditions of Nalanda were transplanted into Tibet over a long span of five hundred years, where they flourished over a thousand years. With the unfortunate cultural genocide in Tibet, the dharma returns to its motherland India by the noble dynamism of various venerable Tibetan practitioners, to flourish for another millennium. This renaissance is bliss. It is a triumph of the spirit and scholarship of Nalanda whose enlightening intuition, knowledge and compassion, jnana-sambhara and punya-sambhara can valorise our century. It has an onus of ringing in a new vortex of life, away from the greed (*trsna*) by its serene philosophical tone, by its centrality of human beings. The deadly tentacles of materialistic consumerism spreading like wild fire in an erotocentric culture, the world needs a counter balance in the benign vision where the terrestrial and celestial converge in harmony. The various monasteries and their sangha under dedicated leadership will touch the depths of our being as they cast their undulating waves on our unbounded oceanic consciousness.